to acquire this disease, at least as far as we know. The story is particularly interesting since CPN played so vital a role in catching it in time. Clyde's story is as follows:

"... I have been using sphagnum moss for potting material for thirty years (or more) and never gave it much thought as to being any problem— Let me now add my voice to the concern about the danger of infection from this medium. Sometime in the latter part of December (ed. note— His letter dated 1 Feb 91) I noticed I might be getting some type of infection from a fire ant bite on top of my wrist. Big deal— No problem—Right? I treated it with hydrogen peroxide, rubbing alcohol and iodine(locally). It grew and became an open sore. When it became obvious that things were not getting any better, I finally went to a doctor. He prescribed some medication that cost $91.00 to fill— it didn't help. The infection was growing fast now and had reached above my elbow. Then I remembered an article in CPN about a sphagnum moss problem. I went fumbling through old issues without success so I called my old friend Bruce Bednar who managed to find it in volume 13 dated March, 1984. There it was: *Sporotrichosis*. I took the newsletter to the doctor who, after reading it, agreed. I had seen three doctors, been in the hospital out- patient clinic, had lab cultures made, and spent quite a bit of money, and there it was in CPN all the time. I am now taking 40 drops of potassium iodide three times a day and have open sores from my hand to above my elbow and am hoping to see some good results soon."

In a follow up note a few weeks later, Clyde mentioned that all tolled, he had 12-15 open sores and that the iodide treatment was working since they were drying up.

Plant Versus Animus

By John D. Williams
150 Main St.
Huntington NY 11743
(516) 423-0945

How would you like to be involved in a real-life man-eating plant story? Picture the one in the deepest jungle, where the explorer unexpectedly comes upon a huge, odd, malevolent plant. Getting too close, he finds the plant in sudden writhing motion, capturing and nearly consuming him. Sensational and sensationalized, yes?

Our culture has been treated to stories like these for hundreds of years. Furthermore, these tales are kin to older moving-plant stories that go back through much of recorded history, like this excerpt from the Book of Taliesin:

> The oak marching swiftly made heaven and earth quake
> He was a stout guardian against the enemy,
> his name is much revered.
> The blue bells fought
> and caused great pain;
> they crushed and were crushed, others were pierced through.

In fact there is some evidence that the Druids, priests of the Celts (from which Taliesin took his influence), practiced a sort of tree worship which involved members of the plant kingdom moving with self-contained power. They practiced dowsing. They held ceremony in deepest forests. The few accounts that exist of them hint at an animism for trees (the Roman poet Lucan, for instance).

Truth is stranger than fiction. And for legends to survive for hundreds of years, often elements of truth involved. One explanation for man-eating plant stories is

found in exaggeration. If a species exists that can drown a small mammal (and the pitcher plants can do this), it follows that someone will describe a plant ten times the size. This trend also occurs with the more bizarre animals— the Kraken or giant squid, snakes, whales, sharks, etc. But it is true that in instances of "fabulous beasts" the sightings are fleeting; the glimpses afforded were slight; the enigma grew from that. It is hard to measure a whale at sea even today. One of course expects that with plants, size estimates would be much easier. Integrity comes into question. It is unlikely that any explorer coming back from little-known regions would be considered for return if fantastic creatures were not described. Yet, this was in most cases true anyway... naturalist accounts from the 18th and 19th century are wealths of botanical and zoological information. Fabricated stories weren't needed to justify subsequent trips.

According to Edwin A. Menniger in Fantastic Trees at least some of the man-eating plant reports were initiated by local natives to protect their resources. One tree in particular— the "upas"— was cast in a particularly grisly light: one which has formed the basis for many of the more famous stories. But this explanation too seems incomplete. In the era of expansionism, when the Europeans were eager to exploit and to ferret out the secrets of the globe, it is entirely too cut-and-dry to believe that such a ploy could be successful without a willingness to believe. It is this willingness, rather than a skepticism, that merits further examination. If the three aforementioned reasons were combined, stories of large carnivorous plants seem more understandable. But it is likely too that an element of fear was involved. These adventurers were fundamentally different from those today. They were not worldly. We underestimate what mass media has done for our mentality— Back then, there were many areas of Earth that were unknown, whereas today that is simply not true— unexplored, maybe, but not unknown. And this difference can bring about basic emotional responses.

To understand what is about to be put forth as hypothesis, one should first keep in mind this digression: There is a mass of research and logic connecting human behavior with that of the rest of the animal kingdom. We are animals too, with a known lineage to apelike beings, other mammals, other vertebrates, other multicellular creatures.... Many of our behaviors are traceable to like behaviors in Animalia. One may take this on different levels either reducing humans to little more than instinctual automatons, or declaring us to be of free and wise choice in every action. Yet in either of these philosophical cases, the concept of "genetic memory" would still hold. This view states that within our minds are tendencies from our ancestors, although to some extent modified, forgotten, or subliminal. An obvious example is unconscious scratching— related to grooming behavior by many. Another is hair standing on end.

If we attempt to make more subtle connections, we are forced more to guess. Is it true that our fear of falling in dreams is related to a monkey's safety while asleep in a tree? Could it be that in our vast monetary systems we have merely abstracted a food and territory-gathering system? In these manners, we postulate the beginnings of our reality. It is important to realize that this study is only beginning. The postulates so far are colored by anthrocentrism, and the data is hard won and vague. We have not yet entered the minds of other living beings. Ancestral tribes may have been closer to this than we with all our technical knowledge are now. At the most, we might with logic make a statement such as this: It is better to presume we share more "primitive" traits with other animals than to say that those animals share more "advanced" traits (such as consciousness) with us. It seems safer to say that we share phototaxis with worms than to say they share the ability to think with humans.

It is possible that we, at times, share the "primitive" ability to sense plants in motion. There is evidence in, among other things, animal physiology that suggests this. Many species possess much greater muscle efficiency than we; quite simply, this can be translated to an entirely different homeostasis. For example, a lightning-fast cheetah, at full stride and full power, may feel that the long grasses of the savannah

are moving past it at sixty miles per hour. We can gather no further data for this— we have simply grafted our idea of "animus" to the cheetah. We say that it moves because we believe that we move. This concept of animals in motion is so ancient and ingrained that it appears intact at the beginning of written history— except for a few hints here and there. Our oldest writings have our modern action verbs intact— "to go," "to walk," "to journey," etc. But there is no logic in tracing this lineage back through the animals. There are a myriad of creatures to utilize to develop a hypothesis of what could be termed 'opposite motion.' And the importance of this? While we have in the past taken our baseline reality from physics, there are many reasons why biology should be considered just as rigorous and "hard" a science. Understanding how other creatures sense their world can lead to a greater knowledge. Physics may not hold interspecifically. Therefore, one could make the point that our belief in man-eating plants is a relic, instinctive genetic memory- that other species see plants try to grab them and ground flow underfoot.

Culturing *Drosera Petiolaris* Aff. "Kununurra"

By Gordon C. Snelling
300 Carter
Glendora CA 91740

In the spring of 1990 I was fortunate enough to receive several plants of a new species of the *Drosera petiolaris* complex. These plants are currently known as *Drosera petiolaris* aff. "Kununurra."

This species, unlike the typical *D. petiolaris*, forms a large prostrate rosette. In my opinion this is one of the most attractive members of the complex. In the best plants, the brilliant scarlet lamina are in vivid contrast to the almost white petioles and central portion of the plant. The central portion of the plant itself is green but appears white due to an extremely thick coating of hairs. This is certainly the most wooly of the wooly sundews.

The value of these hairs becomes readily apparent when we look at the plant's habitat, which is typically a hot wet season a hot wet season alternating with a hotter dry season. As the soil dries during the dry season the plant dies back until all that is left is the "fur coated" central bud of the plant. At this time the hairs are likely to serve three functions: they act as insulation from the heat, they reflect light and heat away from the plant, and they act as a surface for water to condense on at night.

The culture of this species is still somewhat in the experimental stage, but I have had very good results with the following method.

Since the plant may become rather large, I suggest a minimum pot size of four inches, six might be better. I use a mix of approximately 50% peat to 50% sand. I've tried other mixes,and even live sphagnum, but I've had best results with the peat/sand mix.

I grow my plants outdoors most of the year. Last summer my plants survived several days when the temperature hit 120°F. This last winter I had several days when the low temperature was in the low 20 degree F. range. Although they survived it, there was a little damage, so I suggest growing indoors under lights during the winter.

I water my plants from the bottom in trays. Each day enough water is put into the tray so that it will be completely absorbed by evening. During cooler weather I reduce watering accordingly. This plant will sometimes go dormant during the summer. If this should happen water should be reduced to keep the soil just damp and watering resumed when growth resumes.